

Catholic Mutual... "CARES"

Plumbing Best Practices

Plumbing maintenance helps to ensure the system remains leak free and properly functioning. Failing to immediately address leaks or plumbing issues can lead to inconvenient and costly repairs. While not all plumbing issues can be avoided, keeping your system maintained and identifying problems as soon as they occur can help to reduce the financial burden of repairs.

The following basic checklist can be used to monitor your plumbing system and to help identify plumbing issues. It is always recommended that a licensed plumber complete any necessary repairs.

Preventive Maintenance Plumbing Checklist

Answering **NO** to any of the questions below indicates that a licensed plumber should be contacted to investigate and correct the issue. There are also instructions provided to ensure good plumbing practices.

Water faucets, spigots, shower heads

Test water taps by turning them on.

- Is the water pressure steady when water is run for a full 10 seconds?
 - A building's water pressure should be no higher than 80psi and no lower than 40psi.
- Is the water consistently clear?
- Is the hot water turned on by the control on the left?
- Do the faucets and spigots have water shutoff valves that work to staunch water flow?
- Do the faucets and spigots appear water tight with no evidence of leaks or loose fittings?

Drains (sink, dishwasher and bathtub drains)

Pour water into all sink and floor drains.

- Is there quick drainage and no foul odor?
 - Presence of either of these may be indicative of a clog in the drain pipe.

Toilets

- Does the bowl refill to a consistent water level?
- Is the toilet securely attached to the floor?

Sink

- Is the sink securely attached to the wall or the base?

Areas near water sources

Inspect inside cabinets and along walls of bathrooms, laundry rooms and kitchens.

- Are wall, shower and sink tiles secure?
- Is flooring flat, not loosened or lifted?
- Are walls and ceiling dry, free of discoloration and solid to the touch?
- Is the wall and ceiling texture consistent, with no bulging, warping, etc.?
- Is wall covering (wall paper or paint) flat and adhered to the wall (without flaking, lifting or bubbling)?
- Is the facility free of mold, mildew or discoloration on walls, ceilings or in cabinets?

Important Safety Warning: If mildew or mold is observed, do not disturb it without wearing non-porous gloves and protective eyewear.

- Is the facility free of musty smells or abnormal dampness/humidity in any rooms or closets?

Water Heaters

Perform all maintenance and testing with caution and wear proper protective gear – gloves, eyewear, etc. Water in the heater tank is hot and testing valves or draining the tank can result in burns!

- Is the water heater temperature set to no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit?
- Is the water heater free of leaks, corrosion or rust?
- Do the water heater safety valves and overflows function properly?
- Most manufacturers of tank water heaters recommend flushing sediment from the tank once a year. Is each of your water heaters flushed on an annual basis?

Pipes

- Are any exposed pipes free of corrosion or lime scale based on visual inspection?
- If insulated, is the insulation around insulated pipes dry and intact?
- Are actions taken to ensure pipes are unlikely to freeze? For additional information, see the *Water and Temperature Sensors* CARES document

Water Meter

- When the emergency shutoff is engaged, does the meter stop registering water flow? (If no, then it is possible you have a leak or faulty meter and should engage a plumber to determine the cause.)

Sump Pump

- Is the basin clear of debris? If no, this is something that can be done by facility maintenance and does not require a plumber.
- Does the float move freely up and down?
- Is the sump pump free of any odors?
- Are the weep hole and impeller clear?

If no is the answer to either of the next two items, put them on the maintenance “to do” list.

- When a storm is coming, do you check on the power source and backup power for the sump pump?
- Does the sump pump get tested quarterly by pouring 3-4 gallons into the sump pit to ensure the pump turns on and off properly?

Boiler

- Has your location’s boiler been inspected by a licensed professional for leaks, pressure, and to ensure all emergency valves are in good working order?

Main Sewer Line or Water Well Pump

- Has your Finance Council considered having your sewer line inspected for possible bulges or root intrusion?
- Is the well system and pump inspected and regularly maintained by a licensed professional?

Sprinkler System

- Does water pool in lawns or planter beds when the sprinkler system is off?
- Does water run from drains or across grassy/other areas into drainage system when the system is off?

Washing Machine, Dishwasher and Refrigerator/Water Filter Hoses

- Are all hoses and connections tight and free of corrosion and leaks?
- Do hoses show any evidence of bulging which may cause the line to burst?

Backflow devices

- If a backflow prevention device exists for your location, is it tested annually by a licensed professional?

Septic Tank

- Is your location's tank routinely pumped? (At least once every three years or as required by your local jurisdiction.)
- Do all of your staff and volunteers understand what can harm the septic system if it goes down the drain?
- Is your drain field being used for anything else?
- Is your location's outdoor system routinely inspected?
- Are detailed records kept about septic maintenance?

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References

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